



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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## BISHOP COX MOVING TO OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The Rt. Rev. William J. Cox, Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland since 1972, has announced his resignation, effective June 30, in order that he might accept an invitation to become Assistant Bishop of Oklahoma.

In Oklahoma, Bishop Cox will provide episcopal assistance to Bishop Gerald N. McAllister, without automatic right of succession.

In November, the Oklahoma Diocesan Convention accepted the resignation of Suffragan Bishop Frederick W. Putnam who had served more than 16 years in that position. Bishop Putnam had completed a year's leave of absence from his Oklahoma post and is now Bishop of the Navajo Area Mission with an office in Farmington, N. Mex.

The 1979 General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved a new canon which regularizes and clarifies the nature of the position of assistant bishop. An assistant bishop is one who has already been consecrated in one jurisdiction and is later appointed to assist the bishop of another diocese. This method of providing episcopal assistance is an alternative to electing a suffragan or coadjutor for the diocese.

Bishop McAllister told the Diocesan Council in December that he expected his new assistant to spend about six months in Oklahoma City before setting up an office in the eastern part of the diocese, probably Tulsa.

Last fall when Bishop McAllister asked for an assistant bishop, he said the reason was the great distances which had to be covered by the bishop throughout the diocese -- which embraces the entire state of Oklahoma -- and not because of the number of members. In the diocese there are 78 parishes, missions and congregations, 160 clergy, 21,452 baptized members, and 16,251 communicants.

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Bishop McAllister told the Council that Bishop Cox will concentrate on mission churches though he will have a full schedule of visitations to both parishes and missions.

Bishop Cox's ministry in the Diocese of Maryland has been largely devoted to overseeing the parishes in the western part of the diocese. At the national level, he has been chairman of the General Convention's Standing Commission on the Church in Small Communities. He has just completed a three-year term as president of another national Episcopal agency which focuses primarily on rural and small-town parishes, the Appalachian Peoples Service Organization, a coalition of 13 dioceses extending from Albany in New York to Atlanta.

Bishop Cox, who is 59, said that while he regrets leaving Maryland, where he has received "so much love and support," he looks forward to the opportunities of a new ministry in Oklahoma.

A native of Kentucky, Bishop Cox attended the University of Cincinnati, George Washington University and Virginia Theological Seminary. He had intended to become a lawyer but his studies were interrupted by World War II. After the War, he became president of a commercial broadcasting corporation in Nebraska. He was ordained a priest in 1958 at the age of 37.

Bishop and Mrs. Cox have three children.

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